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SOME NEGLECTED
ASPECTS OF
COLONIAL HISTORY.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW JERSEY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MAY 12, 1900.

By CHARLES M. ANDREWS,

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN BRYN MAWR COLLEGE,
BRYN MAWR, PENNSYLVANIA.

PATERSON, N. J.:

THE PRESS PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY,
NO. 209 MAIN STREET.

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1906

SOME NEGLECTED ASPECTS OF COLONIAL HISTORY.

It is but fitting that in accepting your honored invitation to address this society at its annual meeting I should speak to you chiefly of the colonies. The historical societies of the seaboard states are the guardians of our colonial history, and in their published collections, their proceedings, and their magazines, have passed but little beyond the border lines that separate colonial from national history. Their chief interest lies in that era of our history when the colonies, not yet legally of age, were but parts of a great British Empire, and subordinate to a sovereign power three thousand miles away, the transformation of which from an insular kingdom, ranking least among the maritime states of the continent, into a world power, upon whose possessions the sun never sets, was to be almost coincident with those years when our age was young and our strength undeveloped.

To the historical societies the student of our early history owes a constant and a heavy debt. Aided sometimes by state appropriations, granted with greater or less reluctance, they have gradually increased the number of their publications which have contained, not only copies of the records and laws of the colonies, but also documents of an unofficial character that have been gathered from far and near and illustrate the institutions, life, and external relations of the settlers, their wars, trade, and political activities. In Georgia, North Carolina, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, the state alone has taken upon itself the burden of publishing its official records; but in Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, the state has combined with the historical society to print its proceedings, court records, and reports of debates, as well as papers of a private and unofficial character. Here state and society have joined in the production of that splendid series of volumes, highly

prized by all students interested in colonial history, commonly known as the *New Jersey Archives*. It is but right that I should pay a tribute of high esteem and honest praise to your former corresponding secretary, the late William A. Whitehead, who for forty years was regarded as the historical society itself, and should add a word of loyal appreciation of the work of those now living, whose names are linked with that of Mr. Whitehead in the great task of making New Jersey's history known to the world.

As one interested in colonial history, though more intimately associated in the local history of another colony, I take pleasure in bearing witness to the important part that New Jersey has played in the events of the past, and to the great value of your published collections wherein that part is demonstrated by the unimpeachable evidence of the printed document. Yet one born in Connecticut and familiar with the history of Connecticut towns cannot but feel that the history of New Jersey falls naturally within his purview. Connecticut gave to New Jersey two of her towns, Newark and Elizabeth. The republic of New Haven, which Connecticut finally absorbed, was not only a colony, but also a mother of colonies, sending out bands of settlers to the shores beyond, some of whom, migrating a second time because of discontent, others because of the unrest that is inborn in the Saxon nature, carried to Long Island and New Jersey the energy and political ideas of the mother community. Connecticut has a right beyond other rights to be interested in New Jersey. The men of New Haven, Milford, Branford, and Guilford, who founded the city in which we now are, brought hither somewhat of that same spirit which prevailed at home, the spirit of the fear of God and belief in the Word of God as the law in civil as well as in religious affairs, which made for independence, honesty, and uprightness. Connecticut blood is in New Jersey, and Connecticut names hold an honored place in your community.

But it is not from the point of view of either New Jersey or Connecticut that I would speak to you this afternoon. In loyalty to their native states, in their desire to make known the peculiar excellencies of the men and the institutions of those

states, in their eagerness to trace the influence and importance of those states in Revolution, constitutional convention, and national era, historians have forgotten that there is a unity to our colonial history that does not appear on the surface, and yet is fundamentally necessary to a proper understanding of our colonial development. Histories of the colonies have dealt largely with local, political and social characteristics; they have treated the course of political events with great fulness of detail, and have centered their interest in the careers of individual men, whether patentees, proprietors, or colonial leaders. They have given the essential features of settlement, have outlined agreements and concessions, frames of government, and bodies of laws. They have discussed the controversies that arose over the control of the different parts of the government and the part that each colony has taken in military campaigns. They have made colonial history a sort of quarry for the genealogist and have devoted pages and even volumes to genealogical details. Experts have sought out every individual of prominence and importance who might become the father of a claim to colonial descent; books have been written in large numbers regarding the pedigrees of families, and colonial history has taken the form of a network of family tree roots which almost threaten to obscure the more vital historical issues underlying colonial development. Novelists have taken the colonial past as a setting for their romances, and in portraying the life of the colonists have given accurate and reliable pictures of times not easy to reproduce. Students of manners and customs have found rich material in the domestic and social habits of the period and have told us how people lived, what they wore, and what were the furnishings of their houses—from the squire to the bond-servant, from the minister to the criminal, from boyhood to old age. With all this activity no one has a right to quarrel. The zealot for one phase of colonial life might wish that less time were spent on other phases, the scholar might urge that his interests were not sufficiently considered, and the foreigner might think and justly assert that too much time was spent on matters purely local; but he who knows the history of historical societies is fully aware that legislators and subscribing mem-

bers are not often scientific historians, and that appropriations are made and memberships increased by appealing to the local interests, family pride, and state loyalty of those who furnish the funds wherewith the materials for the colonial history of each state are finally put into the durable form of the printed book.

Nothing that has been done in the way of printing the records of colonial history, whether lists of colonial officials, rosters of colonial regiments, details of individual careers, or the minute descriptions of local politics or topography, can come amiss to the historical student. We might often wish that much of this work were better done, but it is a distinct gain if it be done at all. Rather than quarrel with work that has been done I would make a plea for the work there is yet to do, and would ask your consideration of certain aspects of colonial history that stand in need of examination and impartial treatment. At no time in our history have so many scholars been engaged in the serious study of colonial life and institutions as now, and at no time has there been greater need of a systematic review of materials that exist, partly in print and partly in manuscript, for a just, accurate, and well proportioned account of the formative period in the history of the United States.

In the first place, the historical student needs a broader foundation of material whereon to base his finished structure. The historical societies have gathered in their collections or in their archives masses of priceless documents relating to the history of their individual states. Many have done this work in the face of discouragement and apathy, and too much praise cannot be given to those men, who, despite financial difficulties, have succeeded in placing upon the shelves series of volumes which bear witness to their enthusiasm and activity. But, on the other hand, there exists too little interest among the people at large in the publication of material for serious history. When one remembers that the printed material is small as compared with that which remains unprinted, and that colonial history, either as a whole or in part, cannot be written until new and carefully selected documents are made accessible to

the student, one is apt to forget his present obligations, and to ask, perhaps sometimes unreasonably, that his debt to the historical society be increased a hundred fold.

In the second place, if governments and people have shown too little regard for the interests of the historical student, no less have the writers of colonial history often failed in their appreciation of some of its most important aspects. There are today few histories of the colonies that deserve commendation. Nowhere in the field of American history have been displayed such serious limitations and defects as in those portions dealing with the period before the Revolution. Writers of state histories have been content to chronicle the annals of their forefathers with little regard for the larger historical importance of the events they are narrating. Their histories have been too often local in interest, provincial in treatment, and devoid of scientific or scholarly value. Local patriotism has exaggerated trivial details, limitation in the field of study has resulted in painstaking attention to matters of minor interest, which, though sometimes valuable as the basis upon which to rest larger generalizations, generally obscure the real issue and perplex and mystify the reader. Such work, though sometimes useful, is frequently unsatisfactory or valueless. It is a striking fact that some of the best histories of the colonies were written a century or more ago.

Not only is the treatment inadequate, but the general ideas are usually incorrect and the point of view is erroneous. The history of an individual colony has often been written as if no other colonies existed except its immediate neighbors, and as if there were no British Empire to which it owed allegiance. We have made the mistake of forgetting that the colonies were only colonies, members of a colonial group extending from Canada to the Leeward Islands, which had a very important place in the larger history of the world as representatives of one of the first and greatest experiments in colonial organization that the world has ever seen. The student may stand in need of a more extensive printing of documentary sources, but he also stands in need of larger conceptions of colonial history as a part of the history of English imperialism and of

world development. The political ideas of the seventeenth century were not the political ideas of today; the colonial policy of those centuries was not the colonial policy of today; and no one is competent to deal adequately with the colonial history who has not grasped the difference of mental longitude between the seventeenth century and the present time. A mere chronicling of facts is not history, and a series of chapters dealing with a mixed variety of ecclesiastical, medical, legal, fiscal, agricultural, and commercial data cannot satisfy the demands of the intelligent reader. Let me quote a recent criticism of a well known history of one of our colonies that has always been considered a work of merit: "To the colonial period," says our critic, "the author devoted 277 pages. Of this nearly the whole was filled with matter relating to climate, topography, social life and customs, Indian relations, military affairs, and events connected with the settlement of an adjoining colony. Not enough space to make even a respectable sketch was devoted to the system of government, or to the internal political history of the province. No attention was paid to the development of legislation, to the conflicts between the executive and legislature, or between the upper and lower houses, to the issues of paper money, or to the land system. Of the place and importance of the royal province in the system of British colonial government, of the special features of the colony as an example of a royal province, of the peculiar relations in which it stood toward the mother country, one will find only hints in these volumes, and those neither many nor very important." That which is true of the work here described is true of many other publications that pass current as colonial histories.

The first and chief neglect has lain in an almost total disregard of the proper standpoint from which to view the colonies. The fact that the colonists were members of a great colonial empire, and were subject to an elaborate colonial administration, has been to a large extent lost sight of in the greater interest historians have had in the settlement of the English in America and the development of democratic forms of government on American soil. Failure

to view the colonies from the standpoint of the mother country has led to many misapprehensions regarding our institutional and constitutional history, to a disregard of such important aspects of our economic development as the commercial, and to the neglect of certain periods, such as the era from 1690 to 1750, when dramatic incidents were wanting, but when the foundations were being laid in government and wealth for the national structure that was to be erected after the Revolution had taken place. The colonies as parts of a great empire offer to the scholar a far wider and more alluring field of investigation than do the colonies as isolated centers of local life. They offer the magnificent problem of a colonial empire created without precedent out of colonies scattered over the world, in India, Africa and America. They offer an opportunity to study processes of experimentations with dependencies in distant lands that had to be organized upon models, either feudal or corporate, that had hitherto been limited in their application to England itself. They offer the relations of a people, legally dependent but practically self-contained, to the higher sovereign power, the British government, to which they owed obedience, but whose injunctions, particularly in matters of defence, they too frequently disobeyed or ignored.

From this point of view the horizon steadily widens and old questions take on a new form. We rise above the limitations of a narrow environment and become more competent to judge reasonably and without prejudice. Constitutionally, the forms of colonial government undergo an important alteration. Instead of the old division into charter, proprietary, and royal colonies, a twofold division appears: corporate and provincial, the latter divisible into two groups, one containing the royal, the other the proprietary provinces, similar in structure to each other, yet strikingly unlike the corporate colonies. In analyzing the history of these colonial forms of government, we note that the proprietary system tends to disappear until only two, Maryland and Pennsylvania, survive, while the royal province gains steadily in numbers until, before the colonial era has ended, Virginia, New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, the Carolinas, and Georgia are organized after

the model. Even Maryland and Pennsylvania were each, for a time, in the hands of the Crown. When we realize, too, that strenuous efforts were made to overthrow the corporate colonies, and to take from the descendants of Penn and Baltimore their charters after 1700, we begin to understand that a colonial system was more or less unconsciously shaping itself in England, whereby systematic and efficient management of the colonies in the interest of an imperial government might be established. The royal colony becomes therefore a subject of the keenest interest to every student of colonial history, and the record of its management by the home administrators becomes a matter of vital concern to all who view colonial matters from other than the local standpoint. Yet it is a fact that even the material for the external history of the royal colonies, contained in the departmental records of the British government, has never been so much as examined, much less used for historical purposes.

Even the internal constitutional history of the royal colonies has never been adequately and scientifically described. The royal province had a large number of royal officials, governor, council, surveyor-general, attorney-general, receiver-general, secretary, chief-justice, and other officers, who received their authority from the Crown. The general assembly, on the other hand, received its authority from the people of the colony, and steadily, during the eighteenth century, the popular body gained at the expense of the royal executive. No adequate study has yet been made of the origin and transmission of power within each colony, of the organization and authority of the executive, legislative, and judicial departments, or the character of administration and local institutions, during the colonial period. The history of the struggle between the executive and legislature has never been adequately worked out in such form as to show that this struggle represents an integral part of our early constitutional history, and is absolutely necessary to any adequate appreciation of the constitutions drafted in the years from 1776 to 1784. This momentous struggle between legislature and executive, in the royal and proprietary provinces, was in reality a silent struggle, in one

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sense almost as revolutionary as the later actual warfare, between the king, whose agent the royal governor was, and the colonists, who elected the deputies to their assemblies. In portraying this struggle our interests have been too much in sympathy with the popular tendencies in colonial development, and we have given too little thought to the conservative forces, or to the justness of the British side of the case. British officials have generally been mentioned only to be condemned. Like the later loyalists of the revolutionary era they have been considered on *a priori* grounds enemies of the country, and have been ignored entirely, or mentioned only to be cast out into utter darkness as Tories. The day is not far distant when justice will be done to these victims of racial and national prejudice, for the attitude hitherto assumed toward the representatives of the British government and the upholders of the British cause is not creditable to the American's sense of fair play.

In this connection we come face to face with a series of neglected aspects of colonial history. No adequate study has been made of the instructions sent to the governors, which, beginning with those sent to Virginia when a proprietary province, and extending through the whole length of colonial history, form a mass of material of the highest worth wherein to trace the growth of the home policy. No adequate study has been made of the colonial agents, of whom each colony had one or more whose duty it was to manage the affairs of the colony in England, to present petitions to the Board of Trade or to the Privy Council, to hold correspondence with the legislative committees appointed in the colonies for that purpose, and to gather documents and statistics in large quantities regarding the affairs of his particular colony. Likewise there are the laws of those colonies which were required to transmit their acts for approval or disapproval to England, an interesting subject, largely unexamined, except by Mr. Goodell for Massachusetts, and Mr. Hildeburn for Pennsylvania.

To these internal and external aspects of colonial history must be added the history of the administrative officials and boards that the British government provided for the supervision and management of the colonies—the Privy Council, Sec-

retaries of State, Lords of the Treasury and the Admiralty, the High Court of Admiralty, the Navy Board, Board of Trade, and other subordinate boards and commissions. As a recent writer has admirably expressed it, "The record of the work of these functionaries in the various lines of governmental activity constitutes the history of imperial control over the colonies, and is, taken in its totality, the history of the British colonial system. When we fully know what the various organs of the British government did in relation to the colonies in the domains of ecclesiastical, commercial, military, and judicial affairs; what control they exercised over colonial legislation, and, to crown the whole, in what ways and how far the sovereign control of Parliament was exercised, we shall understand what the British colonial system was. Nothing short of that will reveal satisfactorily the position held by the colonies under the superintending power of the home government within the growing British Empire. In other words, the student needs, not only to pursue his work to a considerable extent in London, or upon material procured thence, but in imagination frequently to establish himself there, that he may thus view colonial affairs in their proper aspect. To do less than this is to belittle the subject by proclaiming narrow and provincial views concerning it. The central problem of our colonial history grew out of the relations between the imperial power on the one side, and the special jurisdiction on the other. The historian of the present and of the future should possess breadth of information and catholicity of spirit sufficient to do justice to both parties in that conflict. Whether or not in the end we shall be forced to condemn the British colonial system so emphatically as some have been wont to do in the past, whether we condemn it for the same reasons, or for other reasons, it should at least be done intelligently, after a full and impartial examination of all the evidence."

The discussion thus far has centered chiefly in the political and constitutional aspects of our subject, but no less important are those aspects that touch the history of commerce, and the conditions under which the colonists engaged in trade and navigation. The colonies stood to England as parts of a

great system of imperial trade and expansion. They were valued less for the actual territory they contained than for the opportunity that they furnished of increasing the wealth and consequently the strength of the mother country, and they were managed with this idea definitely in view. England had not the slightest intention of managing the colonies so that the colonists might reap the profits. To the mercantilist of that day such a doctrine would have seemed an absurdity. The colonies were to serve the mother country, to increase her profits and to further her welfare. British policy as displayed in the navigation acts and restrictive measures, in the various revenue acts and other statutes for the encouragement of the plantation trade, and in all matters relating to exports and imports, customs, drawbacks, rebates, etc., is one of the most significant aspects of colonial history before 1765. How far these measures drove the colonies into revolution can not be decided until a much more careful investigation has been made of the materials which illustrate the operation of the British colonial system in all its different aspects. One thing we may venture to predict is this, that the mercantile policy represented no idea of tyranny or oppression on the part of the mother country; that it was based on certain recognized commercial principles of the day, which, from the standpoint of England's national consolidation, were and are capable of justification; and that it gave the impetus to England's commercial progress which made her for two centuries the greatest commercial power in the world.

The historian of our colonies has no right to view England's policy in the light of present day ideas, or to deal with dependencies as if he were dealing with independent and sovereign states. No writer can be considered competent to interpret colonial history who is ignorant of the doctrines of mercantilism as worked out in the writings of Mun, Davenant, Child, Gee, Banister, and others, or has no adequate knowledge of the practical attempts to apply these doctrines by the officials who had oversight of colonial affairs. No one is competent to pass judgment upon the relations between England and the colonies who has not viewed the industrial and

commercial life of the colonies in the light of the principles according to which the home government acted. The fact should never be forgotten that we were colonies at a time when ideas as to how colonies should be treated were in their infancy, crude and fluid. Principles of colonial management were shaped very slowly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their development can be followed in the acts of Parliament, and in the writings of the business men of the day; their application can be studied in the actual administration of the colonies themselves. Familiarity with practice and theory can hardly be said to have characterized the writings of those who have hitherto written our colonial histories.

To comprehend the colonial policy of this period we must follow every phase of the old British colonial administration. By this I do not mean merely the organization of that administration at home, but its organization in America as well. The system was not very effective, but it had unity that should be preserved. Four aspects of this subject present themselves to us. First, the organization at home, that is, the committees, commissions, boards, and the like, that existed for the purpose of promoting trade and plantations. Secondly, the organization in the colonies, consisting of officials, other than governors, sent over to carry out the British policy; there were in the colonies not only governors who were under bond to observe the laws of trade and navigation, but also the deputy auditors, collectors, surveyors, naval officers, and certain other officials, such as the surveyors-general of customs and of the woods, the numbers of which increase and the duties of which become more definite as time goes on. Many of these men led exciting lives. Some of them, like Edmund Randolph, Patrick Mein, Robert Quarry, Jeremiah Basse, played important parts in colonial affairs. Some, like Robert Bridger, lived for years in America. Yet we know very little about them. Their careers ought to be followed and justice done them, even though, as was in some instances the case, they were place hunters rather than loyal British officials. Thirdly, we ought to know more about the machinery of administration, both in England and in America. We ought to be familiar with the

routine whereby measures relating to the colonies were put into operation. We know the steps taken before a colonial charter passed the seals, but we do not know accurately the procedure followed before the Board of Trade could act in a single important matter. The board had no final authority of its own. It could consult individuals and other departmental bodies, it could get advice from its own legal advisers and from the Crown lawyers, and it could obtain information from colonial agents and factors; but in the end it could do no more than draft a report recommending to king or parliament the adoption of certain measures. Actual authority was always embodied in a royal letters patent or other royal warrant, an order in council, or an act of parliament, never in a decision of the Board of Trade.

We ought to know more about the methods employed to enforce legislation in America, particularly the legislation known as the navigation acts. There does not exist any account whatsoever of the vice-admiralty system in the colonies. This system is not only important but interesting, as it presents many peculiarities unknown to English practice. Before 1697 admiralty matters in the colonies were generally brought before the common law courts, or before special courts vested with admiralty powers. The attempt which England made to erect her own vice-admiralty system led to a long struggle with the colonies, particularly in New England, where in many instances the settlers deemed the new system an encroachment upon their liberties. Pennsylvania and Maryland, as well as Massachusetts and Rhode Island, took part in the controversy, one outcome of which was an attempt to define admiralty jurisdiction and to determine the boundary line between the new vice-admiralty courts and the colonial courts. Much bitterness of feeling resulted, which tended to widen the breach between the colonists and the Crown officers. Similar difficulties arose in the case of the collectors and naval officers, and the jurisdiction of each was a constant cause of dispute.

Fourthly, we should know a great deal more thoroughly than is now known the character and significance of the navigation acts themselves, and the other measures which restricted

colonial trade and manufactures. Were they harmful, as many writers have deemed them, or were they, on the other hand, rather beneficial than otherwise, as a recent writer would have us believe? There are some twenty-nine acts of various kinds passed between 1650 and 1763. Those properly known as the navigation acts begin with the Cromwellian act of 1650 and close with the great administrative act of William III in 1696. These acts have been discussed by nearly every writer on colonial history; some have discussed them with bitterness and prejudice, others with moderation and respect; but in no case has the ground been thoroughly explored. Neither the origin, extent, nor operation of the acts has been adequately described, nor has their economic importance in the history of the colonies been in any way accurately determined. They cannot be understood without a more careful consideration of the political and parliamentary activities of the period, of the commercial rivalry between London and the great export towns like Bristol, of the staple products of the colonies themselves. We should follow the economic development of the colonies in all its aspects, not only of those that afterwards revolted, but also of those that remained loyal to Great Britain—West Indian and Canadian colonies that were as integral a part of the colonial system as were the original thirteen colonies. We should know the methods of granting and subdividing the land of each colony individually, and of all the colonies comparatively, for the land system of a people is not only the basis of its agricultural life, but is also an expression of its social, and even ethical, peculiarities. We should know the character of the soil, the nature of the climate, the amount of produce available for export, the extent of native and foreign shipping engaged in the carrying trade, and the manifold intricacies of trade routes and markets. It will be necessary to determine as nearly as may be the amount of illicit trading, to discover, if we can, how far naval officers and colonial governors connived at smuggling and the granting of false clearances and certificates, and to trace the history, from both the English and the colonial points of view, of ports of entry and of exit, which became a burning question in

many of the colonies in the early eighteenth century. Some of these questions can never be satisfactorily answered, for the evidence is often meager and one sided, but it is at least worth while to make an attempt to understand the problems that they suggest.

If the navigation acts require further elucidation, no less do those acts that are commonly spoken of as the "restrictive measures." Toward the end of the seventeenth century and in the early part of the eighteenth century England's colonial policy entered upon a new phase. It concerned itself not only with shipping, enumerated commodities, and colonial imports, but also with the agricultural and industrial activities of the colonists themselves. Every effort was made to induce the colonists to engage in the production of such raw materials as pitch, tar, turpentine, and hemp, that they might supply those naval stores which the mother country was compelled to purchase of the northern crowns, not with manufactured goods but with ready money, to the great distress of the mercantilists. Positive efforts were made in almost all the colonies to encourage this form of industrial activity by means of bounties, rebates, drawbacks and the like, by suitable instruction, and by favorable legislation. Equally important were the attempts made to control manufacturing. Much has been written and well written regarding the rise of manufactures in the colonies, but few attempts have been made to bring it into its proper connection with the larger economic history of the time, to trace its relation to agriculture on one side, and exports on the other, to note the economic contrast which the various colonies offer, and to arrange the colonies in groups based on these economic peculiarities. Furthermore, nothing has been done in the way of showing the efforts of the English merchants and of their factors in America to effect the passage of the Hat Act, the Molasses Act, the Iron Act, three of the best known of the measures designed to limit colonial and industrial and commercial activities. To the Molasses Act, which would have ruined New England had it been enforced, Palfrey devotes less than one page, and Channing so little understands it that he declares it to have been passed at the instance of a

Boston merchant who was interested in sugar growing in the West Indies. Yet Palfrey can devote ninety pages to the history of witchcraft, which though an interesting episode in New England history, is but an incident throwing light on the intellectual and religious views of the Puritans.

The failure of many writers in the past to consider questions of the character already noted as well as of others that I have not included here, is due to causes that are not difficult to discover. In the first place, these historical problems, though fundamentally important as concerning some of the most essential features of our national growth and expansion, are difficult to solve, because the material is scattered and not readily accessible, and because a proper treatment of them requires a certain amount of expert knowledge and training. In the second place, they are generally devoid of dramatic interest, because they concern conditions rather than men, institutions rather than personalities. The modern reader demands a story, picturesque and illustrated, a popular narrative, rhetorically adorned, which will swing along more or less of itself, requiring little mental effort, giving the maximum of enjoyment in return for the minimum expenditure of mind. Military campaigns are more exciting than legislative conflicts, and tales of adventure and persecution are more alluring than the intricacies of paper money and land banks. Inasmuch, therefore, as a particular period of our history from 1690 to 1750 has none of the dramatic qualities of the years before 1689 or after 1754, it has been neglected by writers on colonial history as containing few events worthy of narration. Yet it covered the history of two generations of men, was the training time of those, or of the fathers of those, who sat in the Stamp Act and Continental Congresses, a time of more or less silent conflict, of hard experiences, which taught men lessons and brought men knowledge; a time when the political systems already established were taking on new strength and the economic conditions were undergoing important changes, preparing the way for the circumstances of 1765. Of this period there is literally no history worthy of the name.

I have now said enough to justify my title, and far more than enough to wear out your patience. I might speak of the

social features, such as slavery, indentured service, and conditions of labor; of financial features, such as feudal tenures and quit rents, colonial currency, paper money, and mercantile methods; of legal features, such as the common and statute law in the colonies, rights of appeal to England, and the functions and organizations of the colonial courts. But of all these things I will say nothing. In closing, I would add one word in behalf of the needs of historical students. Never has there been a time when a greater zeal was being shown for the gathering of documentary evidence for history. The local historical societies are many of them taking on new life and displaying unusual energy. Documents in increasing numbers are being transcribed in England and being brought to this country. Manuscripts, hitherto scattered, are being gathered into local archives, and in time are finding their place in the volumes which the historical societies or the state governments are issuing. The American Historical Association is organizing valuable machinery for the printing and calendaring of important collections. Its Historical Manuscript Commission has issued already three volumes of documents, its Public Archives Commission has just begun its work of examining the whole field of official records and of publishing lists of such records as are either in manuscript or in print; and the American Historical Review has given up a portion of its space to the printing of new historical material. There is a hope that Congress may do something to aid in these many undertakings, and that individual states may further the work by the appointment of local commissions with funds wherewith to accomplish something effective, to pay expenses, even if the laborer, as is too often the case, be not deemed worthy of his hire. All these efforts are full of promise, but they will fail without the combined assistance of every one interested in the history of our country. What will be accomplished eventually no one can conjecture. It is something to have awakened a new interest, to have aroused a new willingness on the part of the unprofessional as well as the professional student to work for the common cause. The scholar is dependent on the material aid contributed by those who are making it possible for valuable and greatly needed documents to be put into permanent form. Ac-

